
LET US DISARM WAR!

¡Desarmemos la guerra!

by

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ONLY four days ago, on Christmas Day, the whole Christian world turned in thought to Palestine, to that night long ago when the shepherds watched their flocks by night, and the angels appeared and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to men of good will !"

"Peace to men of good will"—not peace to all men good or bad—this is what the angels sang. And the angels were very wise, because by no miracle can peace be brought into the heart of a man of ill will. Only when a man's heart is full of good will, not only is there then peace within him, he also creates peace on every side of him. If only all men were "men of good will," we should not need to raise our cry, "Let us disarm War !"

This is the problem before us—how to create, intensify, and make permanent, in each one of us, and so in the nation and in the world, the spirit of good will. The problem is so vast that no one idealist will understand it, and no one reformer will bring, by his sole effort, the ending of War. Thousands of idealists and reformers, of every type of imagination and capacity, are required to disarm War. As only just one idealist, I will expound the great problem as I see it.

In my imagination, I start with the axiom that the spirit of good will is natural in all men, and that it is innate in every child who is born. I know that our physical bodies are derived from animals, and that, in a troublesome manner, animal impulses exist in each cell of our body. But if, as modern science says, our bodies have

climbed up from the brute, our souls on the other hand have descended from the angels. While, with one part of our human nature, we want to destroy any one who stands in our way and thwarts our will, with another part of that same human nature, there flows from us a spirit of friendship to our fellow-man who stands before us, even when he does us an injury. We men are dual, part brute, and part angel. With the part of the brute we admire War; with the part of the angel, we love Peace, for Peace is the only way to express our sense of unity with all that lives. How can we organize the life of a nation, so that the brute in us will get less and less sustenance, and so die, and the angel in us will get more and more what he needs for his dreams of love and service?

We are confronted in the beginning with a lamentable fact, which is, that a good force can sometimes turn to evil. They say that sometimes love can turn to hate; I do not believe that is true, if we mean by love that adoration of a beloved which contains within it the offering of self-sacrifice. But a lesser love, which is full of personality and is only a cry of demand, not of offering, can twist itself to harm the person who was once loved. Similarly is it with one of the noblest sentiments of which man is capable, and that is patriotism.

That mysterious spiritual entity which we call "Fatherland" or "Motherland" reveals to us beauties and greatnesses in life that even the love of God cannot reveal. To return to one's country, and feel its mysterious influence as a spiritual aura which purifies, is a precious experience. More precious still is the profound and spiritual sense which arises, of service rendered to one's people, in the pioneer who suffers to open new fields of development for them, and in the soldier who dies for his country.

But if the love of one's country is such a powerful spiritual force, how is it that it cannot separate itself from detestation and hatred of our fellow-men born in another nation? Of course, in time of peace between two nations, all antipathies lie dormant; but only let there be some little event—a so-called insult to the flag, or to national honour—and then the subconscious antipathy bursts like a slumbering volcano that breaks into eruption. But why? Why can we not love our fellow-men all the time, and when they injure us (or we think they injure us), try to understand that they are still our fellow-men and brothers, in spite of what they have done against us?

The reason has been lately discovered. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Freud, Jung, Adler and other psychoanalysts who have revealed to us what they term the "unconscious mind". Very briefly summarized, they tell us that there are two aspects of mind; one aspect is that of which each of us is conscious, our own particular mind. This conscious mind of ours is moulded by the race in which we are born, for each race has not only its peculiarities of nerve structure, but also a definite cultural tradition.

Of course each of us, as a soul, has a mental disposition, which is the result of thought of many previous lives on earth; we have an aptitude for mathematics rather than for languages or *vice versa*, because we have specialized our thinking in past lives. But when we are born in a particular race, our minds are strongly influenced by our racial tradition. Sometimes, there is very little originality in our thinking, because we are only mirrors of what surrounds us. It was a Chinese sage who said: "A man is more like the age he is born in, than he is like his grandfather." However, whatever be our own personal and particular mind, great or small, it is our possession;

and with mental training, we can direct our mind to think *as we want it to think*, that is, along some pre-determined line.

But when we try to think *as we want to think*, an unexpected complication appears; it is this complication which psychoanalysis to-day terms the "unconscious". Our personal and particular mind, the mind of each of us now in this theatre, is very much like a low island which is surrounded by the ocean. When the sea is calm, the island keeps the sea at its proper boundary. But if there should be a storm, then, because the island is low, the waters of the sea submerge the island for the time. This is what happens at a time of popular excitement. The "collective unconscious," which surrounds our mind, overwhelms our mind, and then we begin to think, *not* according to our past habits, but according to what the crowd dictates at the time.

This aspect is well known in psychology, and it is called the "instinct of the herd". It has been very graphically described by the eminent psychoanalyst Jung as follows:

The collective unconscious is the sediment of all the experience of the universe of all time, and is also an image of the universe that has been in process of formation for untold ages. In the course of time, certain features become prominent in this image, the so-called *dominants* . . . The unconscious possesses possibilities of wisdom that are completely closed to consciousness, [and, let me add, possibilities of superstition also that are completely closed to consciousness], for the unconscious has at its disposal not only all the psychic contents that are under the threshold because they had been forgotten or overlooked, but all the wisdom

[and, let me add, the unwisdom too] of the experience of untold ages, deposited in the course of time and lying potential in the human brain.

Now this "collective unconscious" is the receptacle of the past thinking of mankind. And because, since the beginning of civilization, man has accepted competition, struggle, and War as the final arbiters of life, the "collective unconscious" has a very marked tendency to quarrelsomeness and resentment. Therefore we see that remarkable phenomenon of a kind-hearted and sensible person behaving like a lunatic, throwing his discretion to the winds, at the dictates of popular excitement. Like the island which is for the time swamped by the waves, so the ordinary peace-loving citizen becomes violently bellicose, not because he really understands the rights and the wrongs of the case, but because he cannot help thinking in a particular way, just at that time.

It is this "collective unconscious" of humanity which sweeps a nation into War. At such high tides of activity of the "unconscious," we all get infected with the bacillus of hate, and are swept onwards with the tide to War.

I think no one has described so graphically as the great Greek statesman and historian Thucydides what happens to our moral sense when "war fever" begins to infect a nation. Thucydides was not only a statesman and historian, but also a great general, and so he knew well what he describes. These are his words :

In peace and prosperity both States and men are free to act upon higher motives. They are not caught up by coils of circumstance which drive them without their volition. But War, taking away the margin in daily

life, is a teacher who educates by violence; and he makes men's characters fit their conditions.

Thucydides points out how, under the stress of war fever, the meaning of words in relation to things are changed. The virtues of Thoughtfulness, Prudence, Moderation and Generosity, which we value so highly during Peace, are derided; in War time, frantic energy becomes the standard of a man's worth. How religion itself becomes a tool in War is described thus by Thucydides in speaking of conditions in Athens, when rival political parties used religion as a pawn in their political game. "Neither side cared for religion; but both used it with enthusiasm as a pretext for various odious purposes."

How are we to prevent ourselves from being infected by the mental twist which war fever brings? That is a very difficult matter; and yet the future of humanity depends upon a moral prophylaxis against the contamination by war fever.

To me, the genesis of War is in time of Peace. The hatred that manifests itself as war fever is only one particular expression of the vast amount of hatred which modern civilization is continually creating, during what we call times of "peace and prosperity". For, what is our "peace and prosperity" but a fierce war of citizen against citizen, and industry against industry?

If we had the power of clairvoyance, and could look into the hearts of the men and women of Buenos Aires, what would we see? We should see a struggle of mind against mind, heart against heart. We should see how all those who compose the "business world" have accepted, without the slightest challenge, the principle of the jungle

that of the "survival of the fittest". Each business man is struggling to make a larger business, to increase his bank account, to command a greater respect from his fellow-citizens. And as every one of his competitors is doing the same, the result is a "war to the knife".

And in this struggle in the world of "big business," waged by a few who have brains, character and capital, but little or none of charity, the masses of the people are mere pawns in the game. Is it not customary for a manufacturer to say of his employees that he employs a thousand "hands"? He does not say that he employs a thousand "hearts" or a thousand "souls". Business thinks of the worker as only a superfine machine. In this furious production by manufacturers, in this "opening up" as it is called of new industries, one result is a bitterness of heart for millions. All cannot be equally rich, for some are born more clever than others.

And this that I say about business applies equally to what we call "society life". One woman who has a circle of distinguished friends envies another who has a larger circle of more distinguished friends. One rich woman must outshine another rich woman, and get more lines in the newspaper about her party, or about the Paris "creation" which she wears. The standard of dress and luxury set by the "society woman" who has money, earned for her by her husband or inherited from her ancestors, reacts on the manner of dressing of her maid. Slowly our rich, and especially the women members of the rich, have created a subtle war, which produces acute miseries to thousands, though we do not note its effects in crippled limbs or broken bodies.

So, on all sides of us, in times of "peace and prosperity," we are creating a kind of War. Bitterness,

envy, hatred of the poor against the rich, of the man who fails against his rival who succeeds, all these are like the forces under a slumbering volcano. When the time comes, they burst through to the surface, either as a revolution, or as a powerful force which intensifies the "collective unconscious," when it directs its energies to hate another nation.

It was the German historian, Clausewitz, who said the truest thing I know about the way wars are created to-day. He said: "War is the continuation of politics by other means." I would go one step further still and say: "War is the continuation of business by other means." For me, War is not the begetter of evils; War is the child begotten of parents who are poverty and disease, who are unscrupulousness and greed. We have in India a fine proverb, that "the tears of the poor undermine the thrones of kings". That spirit in a nation which makes it possible to develop a war fever is a punishment created for itself, by its callousness against the sufferings of the poor. For, according to us in India, not only has the individual his Karma, but also a nation. As the individual reaps as he sows, so too does a nation reap as it has sown. I do not know who is more to be pitied, after a war, the vanquished or the victor.

I said, at the beginning, that I am only one idealist, and that the solution suggested by just one individual is not enough to disarm War. I am consciously limiting myself to one aspect of the remedy, in suggesting a prophylaxis along one particular line. Had I time, I should like to make clear to you that I do not believe we shall finally disarm War, till we have a reform of the banking system of the world. International finance is one element which contributes to War—or to Peace. And I believe too, in order to bring a true peace into the heart of each citizen, a great change will

have to take place in the present conception of the ownership of land.

There is an acute land-hunger existing in Western nations, owing to the artificial values created for land by exploiters. I will only mention, in passing, that from time immemorial in India, the land belongs to the State, represented by the King. The tenant therefore is only a perpetual lessee, and if he alienates the land, the State always enters in as a third partner in the transaction between buyer and seller. Agricultural land is graded into six classes, and the Government revenue for each is fixed beforehand. Therefore, except in cities where only a small percentage of the inhabitants live, there is no artificial exploitation of land by owners who hold back land from being subdivided, or by real estate agents who try to force upwards the price of land by advertisement. I mention these remedies in passing, just to show that I am aware that the ethical prophylaxis against War is not the only one which will disarm War.

Let me say here that I am a warm supporter of the League of Nations. It has many defects, and its action is far too weak in the political field. But in the field of social betterment, in co-ordinating the work of many nations, to abolish social and industrial evils, already its record is splendid. Its work for women and children, for factory and other workers, to control epidemics, all this part of the work of the League calls on us all to co-operate with the only international organization which exists to voice the awakening conscience of Humanity. If it has defects, it is better to remedy them from within, as a member of the League. Some day there will be a better organization than the League of Nations; but at any rate, the present League is the precursor of a better one, and I believe it is the duty of all to strengthen it to-day.

By what process can we intensify the spirit of good will, so that War, as a method of solving international difficulties, will never be considered even a possibility? If I could answer this problem completely, I should be the greatest saviour of mankind. Yet as every idealist is a little saviour of mankind, his dreams are worth considering, and my dream is as follows.

It is, first of all, to begin with the children. We must arrange for them a system of education so full of health, happiness, and above all opportunities for artistic creation, that by a quick development of their intuitions they will discover the greatest thing worth knowing. That greatest thing is the collective life of Humanity. No man is properly educated until he understands the greatness of the Whole of which he is a part. When once we are educated, in this true sense, we look at all problems from the centre, and not from the circumference.

Now there are in life three great concepts which include between them all that can possibly exist. They are God, Man, and Nature. To me personally, all three concepts are modes of self-revelation of one fundamental Unity, and therefore it does not matter, so far as conduct is concerned, with which of the three one starts to discover Life. My temperament leads me to begin with Man. For me, Man is the greatest mystery, and in discovering what Man is, I discover the way to God. Therefore I say, let us begin with Man.

Let us teach our children to take an intense delight in the collective life of Humanity. This cannot be done by lectures. It can be achieved in a more subtle way, by teaching children to create through artistic faculty. The moment a child learns to create something beautiful, however small, he enters the universal life of mankind.

For artists have no nationality; they belong to the whole world. What is Art but an exteriorization of that united life of Man, Nature, and God, which pulsates through the universe?

Therefore, if we train children to grow in intuition, by giving them opportunities for artistic expression, then, all the time, in a subtle way, they will be communing with the collective life of Mankind. When they grow to be men and women, instinctively their judgment on any event, national or international, will start with the axiom: "What is best for *all* men, for their common happiness?"

In this manner, we shall oppose an influence of discrimination and brotherhood which will counter-balance that "collective unconscious" which surrounds us all the time. For, what we term "idealism" is not a vague aspiration. Idealism is the way in which the universe tries to think. If therefore we become idealists, we allow the hidden forces of the universe to find an outlet; and those hidden forces on the side of the Good, the True and the Beautiful are always victorious, if only they can find channels for their expression.

Let us train the children to be such channels, and when they grow to be men and women, they will disarm War.

Much can be done to bring the nations together by an exchange of the beautiful things which they have created. Science has helped us with her inventions, and to-day through books and travel the West knows a little of the charm of the East, and the East is beginning to understand the value of the strength of the West. I know that in times of war fever these spiritual bonds between nations become too weak to prevent War; nevertheless, each link in the realm of culture between nation

and nation helps to strengthen the sense of our fundamental Unity.

I should like to mention here how much is being done to increase the sense of good will by the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides throughout the world. I belong to the Boy Scout movement in India, and help it wherever I can, because it, like the Theosophical Society, is a "nucleus of Universal Brotherhood". Therefore the larger the number of boys and girls who join the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides, and the more numerous the opportunities which we elders give them with our money to meet in international "jamborees," the more securely we keep War at a distance.

Of course, Religion here should come to our aid. Indeed, it is the duty of Religion to prevent War, for no Religion is worthy of the name "Religion" unless it exists for all mankind, and therefore teaches all men to be one. Yet with the exception of two Religions, all existing Religions accept the idea of War. You all know how your Christian priests bless the standards which are going to be carried to battle. Hinduism accepts the caste of the Kshattriya, the fighter, as necessary for civilization. Muhammadanism promises heaven to the follower of the Prophet who dies on the battlefield.

The only two Religions which have never countenanced War in any form are Buddhism and Confucianism. When Buddhist lands, like Ceylon and Burma, were invaded by foreign conquerors, never did a single Buddhist monk say that it was right to slay even one oppressor in order to free the Fatherland. Killing is killing, said the Buddha, and the killing of a fellow-man for a personal injury is not different in kind from the killing of a fellow-man for a national injury. So too with Confucius, for whom the most degrading occupation in life was that of the soldier. Less than a century

ago, a Chinese father committed suicide, because his son became a soldier, and so brought disgrace on all his ancestors. Most unfortunately to-day, China is turning her back on Confucius, and is trying to imitate Western nations in their conceptions of national greatness, for she is transforming her peace-loving citizens into a powerful army of soldiers equipped with the latest weapons of destruction.

Religion to-day does not help us effectively to disarm War. We must therefore create a new Religion that *will* disarm War. I look for that Religion to come from our children. But they must be artists first, and patriots afterwards. For, greater than the unit is the Whole; so, greater than the Fatherland is Humanity, that wonderful receptacle of the beauty and goodness of God. If as you love God, you cannot love *all* men, even your rivals of another nationality, you have certainly not discovered the God of all men. When you love all men, when, just because you love your own countrymen with intensity, your heart goes out in sympathy to men of other nations, then you have discovered the only Religion worth professing, the only God worthy of your highest worship.

In this matter of putting an end to all War, the workers of the world can do a great deal, if they care to use their power. During the last fifty years, there has arisen a new factor in controlling the affairs of nations; it is the power of Labour. Not only is Labour becoming a factor of power within the nation, it is also transforming itself into a new factor in the affairs of the world taken as a whole. It is this concept of the world as a whole which underlies the term "the proletariat of the world". The term does not as yet include all mankind, because the word "proletariat" denotes now only manual workers, and not workers with the brain, like teachers, artists, philosophers, scientists

and merchants. But in spite of this limitation, there has already arisen in Labour the idea that all mankind makes one Whole. This consciousness of a World Unity, though as yet quiescent in Labour, can be made a powerful factor to disarm War.

For, who suffer *first*, when a war breaks out? The first to feel the pinch of hunger are the workers. Prices go up, and they have no bank accounts or dividends to draw upon; it is the workers—especially their women and their children—who feel first the effects of the waste of a nation's resources when it goes to war. Let me illustrate what Labour can do to prevent War, by an incident which I witnessed myself.

Two years after the Great War ended in Europe, while England was still suffering all the evils of War, the political party in power, with Mr. Lloyd George as Prime Minister, insisted on following a policy on behalf of Poland, which brought England to the verge of another war. France gave her support to England, and it seemed a mere matter of days before England would be engaged in another war. Then, the Labour Party of England, with the representatives of all the Trades Unions, hurriedly summoned a Congress. I was present at this Congress as a spectator. With one voice, all the Trades Unions resolved that if Mr. Lloyd George determined to send troops or material to help Poland, and so to begin a new war, the Trades Unions would call out every man and woman who worked in any factory that made munitions of war, or in any factory which manufactured material necessary for the equipment of soldiers. The Congress appointed a "Council of Action".

So clear was the declaration of Labour that England should *not* send a single soldier or gun to help Poland to fight her wars, that Mr. Lloyd George

was forced to modify his policy, and the threatened war did not take place.

In exactly the same way, in every country where Labour is organized into a compact body, Labour *can* prevent War. But for this, the workers must not allow themselves to be inflamed by politicians, or inflammatory newspapers, or other makers of War. If the worker is a patriot first and a humanitarian afterwards, then, inevitably, he will be swept off his feet by popular excitement, and he will shout with all the others for War. But if he is first and foremost a humanitarian, a brother of all his fellow-workers, even of the country which is being denounced by public opinion, he will see more clearly how to help his country, by preventing it from making the great blunder of going to war.

We shall disarm War, not immediately, but soon. But how soon depends on how quickly we can change the spirit of education. For the building of the New World, clean hands are required, the innocent hands of the children. We men and women are too contaminated with the evil ideas of the past, as to what constitutes greatness in the individual and in the nation; and also we have, most of us, lost the capacity of artistic creation. We can dream dreams—indeed we must—but those dreams will become actualities when the children of to-day become men and women.

If we have so far failed to disarm War, let us at least give our children that opportunity. Your Teacher, who is my Teacher too in a way you may not understand, said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." Let them go to Him with their little artistic creations, and He, who is the Prince of Peace, will build with their help the New World where the word "War" will not exist in the speech of the people.

This is my dream—a New World built by the hands of the children of to-day, a New World which will be supremely all men's World, because the God of all Mankind will be Worshipped everywhere under many names. That God of the future will be worshipped with the offerings, not of War, but of Peace, and so only shall we disarm War.

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The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb, and the leopard
shall lie down with the kid ; and
the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ;



AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM
(Design by Kathleen Jones, aged 14.)